



Race to the Top: The Rhode Island Proposal Changes Made in the Round 2 Proposal

In March, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Race to the Top Round 1 funds to only two states, Delaware and Tennessee. Rhode Island was one of 16 finalists in Round 1, placing 8th among the 41 states that applied for funding. We received the 2nd-highest score in the country on the most important section of Race to the Top, "Great Teachers and Leaders."

Using feedback from the team that reviewed our Round 1 proposal and the input and guidance from a broad spectrum of Rhode Islanders, we have built on the strengths in Round 1 and improved our Round 2 proposal in several key areas.

We have made these changes in order to:

Build statewide support for our Round 2 proposal by including more and stronger letters of endorsement from the public, gaining stronger support from local and statewide teachers' unions, and encouraging all school districts to sign Memorandums of Understanding to participate in Race to the Top.

Gain points in sections where we did not score well in Round 1. We will gain points in Section A if we receive stronger support from labor unions, and we will gain points in Section F because the General Assembly has lifted the cap on charter schools. We will gain even more points in Section F if the General Assembly approves a funding formula for aid to education.

Maintain or add points in sections where we scored well in Round 1. We expect to gain points in Sections B, C, D, and STEM, where we have added information to further clarify ongoing state initiatives.

Maintain the statewide impact of initiatives in our proposal. We have added proposals for an ongoing role for the Race to

the Top Steering Committee to monitor implementation of the grant (Section A), and we propose a statewide committee to develop an education-evaluation system (Section D).

Reduce the budget without compromising the integrity of our proposal. In Round 1, we applied for \$126.6 million. Because our budget limit for Round 2 will be \$75 million, we had to reduce the scope of our proposal in certain areas. For example, rather than training all educators we will offer training to leadership teams that will bring information back to the districts (Section B).

Here is a summary of changes we have made in our Round 2 proposal:

Section A: Student Success Factors

Section A1i is now an executive summary of the entire proposal.

We introduced the idea of keeping the Steering Committee together throughout implementation of the grant to hold us accountable for effective implementation and for achieving results. (A2i)

We emphasize the current partnerships between labor and management that can highlight opportunities for ongoing and future partnerships. (A1ii and A2ii)

Section B: Standards and Assessments

We updated the timeline for adoption of Common Core Standards. (B1ii)

We updated the consortium information to include the Achieve Consortium and the State Board Exam Consortium. (B2)

We clarified and provided focus and structure for the plan to transition to enhanced standards and assessments. (B3)

We changed the professional-development approach for study of the standards so that it targets leadership teams. (B3)

We reduced the number of districts participating in intensive curriculum alignment work with the Dana Center. (B3)

We increased and strengthened connections to existing regulations as well as to our strategic plan, *Transforming Education in Rhode Island*. (B3)

Section C: Data Systems

We rewrote the America Competes Act elements, and we have provided evidence to support our ability and capacity to meet each of these elements. (C1)

We have added specific references (InfoWorks!, Survey-Works!, Kids Count, DataHub) to provide evidence that we use and communicate data. (C2)

We have made it clear that Rhode Island will provide but not mandate the instructional-improvement system. We have added examples of the data training that exists in Rhode Island. (C3)

Section D: Great Teachers and Leaders

We have added more complete explanations and descriptions (D1iii), clarifying the use of such terms as value-added, growth, and expanded partnerships. (D2i)

We have established a statewide committee to oversee development of the evaluation system, and we have provided details about the AFT Innovation grant work on evaluations. (D2)

We rewrote the sections on “granting full certification” to clearly explain the certification process. (D2iv)

We refocused the “turnaround teacher corps” to center on the training of experienced teachers rather than of new recruits. (D3i)

We referenced “accountable management” language in Chapter 15 of the Basic Education Program. (D4ii)

We redesigned the delivery model for the School Leadership Academy to ensure cost effectiveness, sustainability, capacity-building potential, and enhanced local partnership and buy-in. (D5)

Section E: Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

We added detail to the language describing the history of attempts to affect persistently low-achieving schools. (E2)

We significantly changed the narrative describing what we know persistently low-achieving schools need and what our plans are for reaching these goals. (E2)

We created better parallelism between the lists of resources and the work that will happen to help persistently low-achieving schools with Race to the Top funds. (E)

We added details regarding parent and community involvement, the connection to youth organizations in the state, attention to special-needs populations, and what the training for leaders will look like. (E)

We added language to our “lessons learned” section to identify where we have already had success. (E)

Section F: State Reform Conditions

Section F1 is substantially rewritten.

We expanded on our total investment in education (based on per-pupil expenditures) compared with education investments in other states. (F1i)

We documented how State policies lead to equitable funding between high-need districts and other districts. (F1ii)

We provided a clearer message about how the current distribution of aid provides more funding to districts that have a higher number of students living in poverty. (F1ii)

We have focused on the district-negotiated agreements that allow funds to flow to the persistently lowest achieving schools, and we have placed a greater emphasis on the Uniform Chart of Accounts and on the proposed funding formula for education aid. (F1ii)

We discussed the new legislation that lifted the cap on charter public schools, and we provided more details regarding innovations in other public schools. (F2)

STEM Section

We added detail and clarity, including material on programs and initiatives that we had not identified in the Round 1 proposal.

If you have questions about our Race to the Top proposal, particularly about the Round 2 changes, you may e-mail:

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Our goal is to submit the strongest proposal in the country and win Race to the Top funds to improve education in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your interest and support!

